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Supervisor: Jonna Johansson
Examiner: Thomas Knoll

*“A study of pan-African ideas of a collective identity
in Africa”*

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Abstract

The intention of this paper has been to look at how pan-African ideas about a common identity have been expressed and developed on the African continent since the period of decolonisation in the 1960s. By using social constructivist identity-theory I have looked at how identity can be constructed by the use of myths, stories, symbols and 'othering'.

Thereafter I used these ideas when analysing different official documents from pan-African movements such as the creation of the AU and its constitutive act to identify what tools that were used to construct a common African identity. Thereby I was also to see if there had been any change in how pan-African ideas have expressed African identity over time.

Keywords: African Union, pan-Africanism, identity, Africa, regional identity, social constructivism

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Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CA	The Constitutive Act
EU	European Union
OAU	Organisation for African Unity

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many of the least developed countries in the world are located in Africa. I believe most people are quite familiar with the problems of the continent, such as starvation, refugee crisis, civil conflicts, effects of HIV/AIDS, corruption, drought and extreme poverty (Griffith et al. 2002). Many of the problems which face the African continent and its peoples are issues which do not limit themselves to stay within state-borders. Poverty, drug-business, diseases and environmental issues are some examples of things which need to be handled on an inter-state level. Only by cooperation can states fight these problems and for inter-state cooperation to work successfully states need to recognize each other as working towards the same goals and interests and see each other as equally worthy partners. Thus the task of developing a regional organization, which can work as a platform for cooperation, is also a matter of constructing regional identity. When states look at themselves as part of a (regional) group; an 'us', they feel solidarity and belonging to each other and are thus more prone to work towards solutions for all within that 'us'. This makes the creation, and perception, of a common identity needed as well in states strive towards development as in their struggle against the many problems on the continent.

MY BACKGROUND

My interest in the identity-discourse is, I suppose, based on a broad interest in psychology and social interaction. During the spring 2010 I wrote my thesis on B-level about how Barack Obama used the construction of a common American identity in his speeches. I looked at social constructivism and identity-theory and analysed three of Obama's more famous, and popular, speeches to see how he used national symbols, stories and myths (more about this in the theory-chapter) in his speeches to strengthen the audiences feelings of belonging to the nation. In this thesis I take it all a step further and look at how a regional identity, which unites peoples also over national borders, can be created. This is a very topical area in the contemporary identity-discourse; in a world with more and more regional organisations and where the EU is often brought up as an ideal example.

1.2 Purpose and research question

As I brought up earlier in this thesis I see the construction of a common regional identity as a pre-requisite for states to unite in the struggle against the many problems on the continent, such as inter-state conflicts etc. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of how pan-African movements since decolonisation have expressed perceptions and ideas of a regional, African, identity in their official documents.

I have looked at how pan-African movements in Africa have used stories, myths and symbols to unite its people and to promote common security by constructing a common identity. Focus of this thesis is thus on the construction of a common African identity and what obstacles there might be for regional organisations to unite its people around the idea of a shared identity.

By writing this thesis I seek to contribute to the understanding of how a regional identity can be constructed and how it can unite people around shared values and perceptions instead of focusing on their diversities. My focus is, as explained earlier in this text, on the construction of an African identity in pan-African movements and documents, which reflect ideas that African peoples need to unite to eliminate white supremacy from the continent (Legum 1965). I will look at pan-African ideas after the period of decolonisation in the 1960s and up to the present and how these ideas have been expressed in i.e. official documents from the regional organizations the African Union and the Organization of African Unity. I will later also analyse if there has been any changes in what variables these pan-African movements have focused on in their creation of regional identity. In other words, I will be looking at social and political movements of pan-African ideas since the 1960s and analyse them from a social constructivist perspective using identity-theory to identify different tools in the construction of a common African identity.

My research-question is:

“How has the expression of a common African identity in pan-African movements changed since decolonisation?”

To answer this question there is a need to understand how the social constructivist theory see identity as something constructed and how this construction can be done. Thus, one necessary sub-question is:

“How can a common identity be constructed from a constructivist perspective?”

This sub-question will be answered by looking at pan-African ideas of African national identities and also by using social constructivist’s identity-theory and its ideas of how symbols, stories, myths and culture can unite people. This will be considered and outlined mainly in the theory-chapter of this thesis; meanwhile the main research-question will be dealt with in the analysis-chapter. When looking at the main research question I will look at different official documents which mirror pan-African ideas and movements and see what can be explained by the constructivist identity-theory.

In the long run, this thesis will also be a useful part in understanding the African Unions limited success in peacemaking and in its efforts to establish a common security regime. By understanding a possible incoherency in perceptions of their identity/identities one might gain a deeper understanding of why member-states have problems to unite around common policies. I will use social constructivism and identity theory to look at what obstacles there might be to the African Union to succeed and how this is a result of the construction of a common identity, or the lack of such.

1.3 Hypothesis

I believe that even if it is true, as many scholars argue, that the African people is very shattered between tribes, nations, states and regions, I still believe I will find out that there is an African identity coming into existence. We often talk about places on the continent as in “Africa” rather than in Chad, Angola, Zambia or Kenya and I believe this shows that the term Africa does mean something to people. Chinua Achebe (1992) wrote that people often ask him “Are you from Africa?” which I see as a way of recognising the continent as being seen as having something, its people, in common rather than recognising the different states within it. I thus believe it will be very interesting in researching how African identity is being expressed in pan-Africa movements and to see if there has been any change in what factors that are being highlighted and stressed since the years of decolonisation.

STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

Hereafter I will have a background-text which explains why it is so important to understand how collective identity is often necessary to unite states around common interests and goals. I will also look what previous academic research there is about constructing identities in regional organisations and how this thesis will fill the gap in the academic field. In the theory-chapter I outline major pan-African ideas and how these have been expressed in different movements since the period of decolonisation in the 1960s. I also use the theory of social constructivism and describe how the theory sees 'truth' and knowledge and how 'myths' and stories can become important parts in the construction of truth. Latter in the theory-chapter, I also look at the creation of 'the other' as an exclusion from 'us' and how this also affects perceptions of identity.

In the methodology-chapter I explain and argue for my choice of method, approach to the questions and theories chosen and what data I have chosen to look at. I also explain what models and questions I have used, as well as what delimitations I have for my research.

In the analysis-chapter I look at three official documents from different periods in pan-African history and use a matrix to arrange different identity-variables.

The last chapter contains my conclusions made from my analyses and also some discussion and suggestions for further research.

1.4 Background

When the AU was created in July 2002 many African leaders hoped that the new pan-African organization would intensify intra-African economic activities, resolve socio-political crises, develop unity on the continent, and improve the region's profile on the global stage (Murithi 2005).

While the optimism among African leaders and delegates about the AU at the inaugural meeting was clear and obvious, Kofi Annan, secretary-general of the United Nations, told leaders 'not to mistake hope for achievement' (Babarinde 2007 p. 3). This argument was probably meant as a reminder of a poor record when it comes to intra-continental agreements and treaties. Many analysts have attributed the difficulty in establishing functional organs on the continent to disagreements over its structure and its strategies in implementing policies (Nathan 2004). These previous explanations focus on organizational

problems which are “relatively” shallow and easy to correct. In my research I have chosen a deeper focus; which relays on the creation of a common African identity.

The AU was set up to replace the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, whose inauguration in 1963 was one of the biggest pan-African movements during the 20th century. Though because of complex principles and rules within the OAU it could not act in order to achieve the success and power its enthusiasts had hoped for. So, why would the AU succeed when the OAU did not? Many analysts have observed that the institutional set up of the AU has a notable similarity with that of the EU, and this structure has not seldom been viewed as an ideal model which would overcome the problems with the OAU. One example of a major obstacle for the OAU was the charter of non-intervention, which was described as ‘the sovereign equality of all member states’ and ‘non-interference in the internal affairs of states’ (Umozurike 1979). In these cases the charter made it impossible for the organisation to deal constructively with secessionist struggles such as those of Biafra, Eritrea or Somaliland (Kamanu 1974; An-Na’im 1988). The charter of non-interference not only paralysed the organisation by making it unable to act when not all its member-states agreed, it also in-directly made it a guardian of the regimes of the status quo, regardless of if they managed to protect the people within them or not (Moeller 2009). If one believes the previous problems of the OAU simply were matters of organizational structure and strategies for implementing policies, there would be no explanation to why the AU still has problems in coming up with, and implementing, common policies in the region (Nathan 2004). Thus I believe it is important to also have an understanding of how the presence, or absence, of shared values and common interests might affect member-states willingness to overlook diversities to unite in cooperation and solidarity.

EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The idea of a regional organisation where states unite around common ideas and interests is in many ways brought into practice in the European Union. It is around the EU the largest academic discourse about common identities is focused and this is why I feel the need to also bring up EU in this case. Even though I do focus on regionalism and pan-African movements in Africa I believe the discourse about the construction of a common identity can not be clearly understood without considering the case of EU. Although there is no absolute answer in the discourse around EUs’ success in creating a common identity, there is clear that states have found some commonalities to unite around. There is plenty of research and material around the creation of a European identity which brings up different

views of what obstacles there are to overcome when a regional organisation tries to re-construct identities and cultures. Much of the material written about what is called an African identity also brings up EU as an ideal model for regional cooperation. Research about how EU has (or has not) managed to create a common identity is thus very helpful also in the discourse about African identity. By using previous research and material which discuss what possibilities, obstacles and difficulties the EU has encountered one can adapt these ideas and conclusions to Africa and thus save a lot of time and energy. When reading the theory-chapter in this thesis one will see that I have used some academic articles and material about the construction of a European identity, and my intention has been to adapt these previous writings about the EU to my research about African regional identity.

Beneath I briefly outline the basics of pan-Africanism and its movements in Africa since decolonisation in the 1960s.

1.5 From pan-African ideas to the creation of AU

Africa must unite or disintegrate individually.

-Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana and co-founder of OAU

Almost half of Africa's countries have been subjects to conflicts and are either struggling to make peace or are working on post-conflict peace-building. Thus it is clear that there is an urgent need for an effective system which can promote peace-building in Africa, and without peace there can be no development. Murithi (2005) argues that it will be much harder for individual states to address these problems by themselves and thus it is necessary for states to come together in solidarity and cooperation. To be able to understand the emergence of AU one must also understand the evolution of pan-African movements.

What is then pan-Africanism? Pan-Africanists have the idea that African regional integration promotes economic growth, alleviates poverty and maintains peace and security among African states (Tamura 2008). According to Murithi (2005) this is an idea that has been around for centuries. Not only has it been seen in movements during the era of slavery but long before that did African people write about, thought about and acted in solidarity

with each other to promote freedom and peace. Pan-Africanism is with other words a constructed idea, which is invented with a purpose; the purpose of overcoming the culture of under-development and dependency on external assistance. Pan-Africanism calls on Africans to unite and become self-reliant (Murithi 2005). The dream for Pan-African politicians, intellectuals and activists is the unification of African states. They strive to overcome the negative remaining traces of slavery and colonialism and to get rid of continuing racism, oppression and exploitation against Africans and African descendants. Thus African continental integration has its ideological roots in a Pan-Africanism that is “a political and cultural phenomenon that regards Africa, Africans, and African descendants abroad as a unit” (Esedebe 1994, p. 5). To simplify the explanation I here roughly compare pan-African forces with the forces nationalism has in nation-building; it focuses on similarities, unity and solidarity within the group. I am strongly aware that this is a very simply and, in many ways, incomplete comparison and that many scholars within the discourse of nation-building might argue that it is wrong by me to compare regional forces on the African continent with those within nations. Though I believe it does give a good first picture of pan-Africanism to the reader who simply wants enough understanding to be able to move on reading this thesis.

PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENTS SINCE DECOLONISATION

The Pan-African ideology became a tool for many African people to unite and deliberate themselves from the power of colonialism. The Organisation for African Unity (OAU), which was established in 1963 with the aim to unify the newly independent states around a common set of goals such as social and economic development, was maybe the biggest pan-African movements in the 20th century (Griffith et al. 2002, Murithi 2005). Thus, I find it extra interesting to analyse its Charter to see how pan-Africanism expressed African identity during a time when the memories from the colonial years were very much present and when state sovereignty was very much not taken for granted.

The OAU incorporated many of the laws and principles of the UN such as the territorial integrity of states, the duty of non-intervention and sovereign equality between states. However, the upcoming decades subjected the union, and the African continent, to large trials where OAU leaders were forced to intervene (Griffith et al. 2002). The fact that the OAU Charter did not imply any sanctions for states in arrear was another issue needing to be confronted. In July 2002, 53 African leaders, instead, inaugurated the African Union (AU) with a fanfare in Durban, South Africa. This was the creation of a continental

institution which was meant to replace the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and thus also meant the end of OAU (Kwasi Tiekue 2004, Packer & Rukare 2002, Murithi 2005). The establishment of this new organisation not only symbolized the change from OAU to the AU, it was also meant to symbolize the dawn of a new era for the continent and its people. Thabo Mbeki, the first president of the organisation, even promised that the African Union would “liberate the African people from their misery, abject poverty and perennial underdevelopment” (Babarinde 2007 p. 3). Some observers of contemporary African politics suggest that the creation of the AU represents the most significant political change in interstate relations in Africa in almost 40 years (Parker & Rukare 2002, Masilela 2009). AU has, similarly to many other African cooperative organisations, its roots in the pan-African assumption that all African people are part of one political and cultural community and its inauguration was, in itself, a giant step forward for pan-African ideas (Daleke 2005).

The Constitutive Act (CA) of the AU is the organisations main official documents and states what interests, principles and objectives it has. In comparison to the OAU Charter the CA creates room for the continental organization to interfere when states do not fulfil the criteria of democracy, human rights and security etc. (Kwasi Tiekue 2004). I find this document very interesting since it states the main principles and ideas of the organisation which today is the main regional organisation on the African continent.

1.6 Previous research

My purpose with this research is to fill a gap which previous academic research has not managed to cover. I will here briefly outline how I have looked at the academic discourse and why I believe my research will be useful.

AFRICAN IDENTITY

Since AU’s inauguration in Durban in 2002 there has been a lot of previous research about its ambitions, and as late as in 2008 the Swedish defence research-agency stated that the organization was fragmented between its ambitions to promote peace and security, its actual capacity and interests of its member-states (Bogland et.al. 2008, Masilela 2009). This is according to me a clear example how the creation of an African identity is yet not strong enough for states to overlook their individual interests in favour for the common good.

A lot of the previous published material about the African Union has made it clear that regionalism is a very topical area for research in the 21st century, though, most research has been focused on the relationship between the UN and different regional organisations in Africa (Franke 2007). This thesis, instead, has the intention of looking at the construction of an African identity and how it might have changed over time. This is something which I have not been able to find much information about when looking at previous research within the field of African identity. Many articles focus on the problem within the continent and its shattered history as difficulties for the creation of a common identity, or on the problem with using EU as a model for Africa. By looking at how the creation of African identity has been formulated in different official documents; from the AU, OAU and other African regional organisations, this thesis can contribute to the understanding of socio-political movements of pan-Africanism after the period of decolonisation in the 1950s. Also, I find that much of the research about African identity is focused on obstacles and limitations related to history, poverty, political instability etc. in the region. According with constructivism, which stresses the idea of identity as a social construction which becomes 'true' only when it is being recognised I believe the aspect of how actors define themselves is something that often is being overlooked in the analyses. By looking at how pan-African movements have expressed their identity we can see how they view themselves, or how they want others to view them, and thus be able to outline characteristics for a pan-African identity. Thus, instead of focusing on surrounding issues I simply intend to look at how an African identity is being expressed.

In 2008 the Swedish defence-department also published a report analysing the African Union, looking at the organization's organs for conflict management. At the end of the report, Bogland et. al. (2008), who were responsible for the report, concluded that there was a further need for more research about the African Union, its organization and how its different sub-organizations are interconnected. Though, because of the organizations somewhat diffuse structure, there are no available schedules that present the structure of AU, which makes it hard to carry through any deeper studies about sub-organs in AU. Today, not many years have past since Bogland et al (2008) did their report, and I believe the African Union needs more time to come to maturity in its' organizational structure before a precise organizational scheme can be established. There is a demand for further research in many other areas related to the AU and even if the focus of this thesis is on the

construction of an African identity I truly believe it will contribute also to the understanding of the AU as a regional organisation and its ambitions and objectives.

REGIONALISM AND IDENTITY -REGIONAL IDENTITY

There is a growing body of literature of regionalism in world politics, particularly the ‘new regionalism’ that has emerged since the 1990s (Bailes & Cottey 2004). However, to me it looks like the literature primarily has an economic perspective, reflecting the fact that many of the regional institutions are economic in nature and also assuming that economic factors are the main drivers behind the new regionalism.

Within the discourse of identity I have not managed to find nearly as much material which focus on the creation of a common identity in Africa as there is about the ‘European identity’ and this is where this thesis comes in. Instead of looking at economic advantages with regionalism in Africa, or at identity-creation in EU, this thesis looks at the creation of a common identity in Africa by analysing socio- and political pan-African movements after the decolonisation. I find there is a gap in the academic research about African identity and I intend to narrow this gap by performing a survey which looks at how African identity has changed during the latter half of the 20th century.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the purpose of this essay I have chosen to use the social constructivist theory which stresses the importance of how the common perceive the world and also how important social constructions are in creating identity. This text first starts with a short presentation of Social Constructivism and continues with a closer look at identity theory, which can be seen as a sub-version of the first.

2.1 *Social constructivism and the creation of identity*

During the last two decades social constructivism has gained increasingly focus in international relations (Devetak et. al. 2007). This chapter will provide an overview of the theory to give a base my analyses of how an African identity is constructed in pan-African documents.

One basic concept within social constructivism which differ it from other ‘traditional’ IR-theories is its view of actors; while both realism and liberalism mostly treat states as unitary

and rational actors. Social constructivism holds that states are neither unitary nor able to make rational decisions in all situations but every action is very much a result of the actors subjective perception of “truth” and “reality”. What they do is significantly influenced by who they are and how they identify themselves (Devetak et al, 2007: 96). Even states are not given, but constructed by historical interactions (Wendt 1994). In his article “collective identity formation and the international state” (1994) Wendt argues that analysts should mainly be interested in the construction of identities and interests and thus take a more sociological than economic approach, compared with those of rational state-centric theories. This is why I argue that social constructivism, together with identity theory, is the right theory to use in this research. Social constructivism focuses on the human consciousness and how we create our perception of reality –truth. Here actors’ belief about each other’s rationality, strategies, preferences and beliefs are summed up as “common knowledge” and it is this knowledge that constructs the ‘truth’. As I told earlier these beliefs don’t need to be true, just believed to be so. Specific cultural forms like norms, rules, institutions, conventions, ideologies etc. are all made up of common knowledge (Wendt 1999: 160).

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

Fundamentally, as stated above, when constructivists see world politics they see actors and their identities as social constructs by the fact that their identities are made up by the social environment, norms, ideas and values (Wendt 1999). Neither of these elements are absolute and unchangeable, but all are parts and results of perceptions and social constructions. Wendt argues that there are three elements that have to be considered when analysing social outcomes; material structure, structure of interests and ideational structure. Each of these three elements is a pre-condition to the others and Wendt writes that “without ideas, there are no interests, without interests there are no meaningful material conditions, without material conditions there is no reality at all” (Wendt 1999: 139). To me this shows the importance of understanding how ideas are created as results of culture, norms and history to understand social and political movements. This stresses the importance to look deeper than what most state-centric theories do when analysing actors actions and reactions. Yet, as mentioned above, ideas who are only shared by one individual are not the same as the common “truth”. This would be a very “thin” knowledge, thus it is important to mention that, even if the constructivist’s idea is that ideas are results of individual’s knowledge, the primary focus is on a subset of collective social constructions; socially shared knowledge.

Socially shared knowledge is of this is culture, which is not a sector in its own but is present in every aspect of shared knowledge (Wendt 1999: 142).

2.1.2 Constructing a common identity

To be able to understand how a common African identity can be created we first have to look at what elements it might consist of. One important sub-question for my thesis must therefore be;

“How can a common identity be constructed from a constructivist perspective?”

In the case of states, establishment, that their identity is being recognised, usually occurs when they are being recognised as a sovereign territory. This is not the case for common regional identities where feelings of belonging and solidarity do not inevitably come together with the birth/existence of the region itself. Not even when states do co-operate through regional organizations are these feelings and perceptions of sharing a common identity inevitable present. Thus is it necessary to understand what variables and factors that might strengthen feelings of belonging and solidarity to promote the construction of such a regional identity.

NATIONALISM AND REGIONAL IDENTITY

Region, boundary, place and territory are very common terms in the current academic discourse about identity. These academic topics aim to map out the changing concepts of the contemporary world. Some authors go as far as arguing that territories and boundaries are losing their traditional meanings as a result of the increased spatial interaction and movements of capital, people and information (Paasi 2000, Nathan 2004, etc.). This discourse is particularly significant in the research and debate about Europe and studies of the so called new regionalism. One challenge in much of this research about regionalism is the emerging forms of ‘new’ governance in a situation of globalization where the noticeable re-scaling of state governance is challenging our traditional thinking on spatial scales and categories (Paasi 2000). The discourse about constructing regional identities often draws similarities to national identity and nationalism.

Ernest Gellner has developed a theory about nationalism and national identity; according to him national identity is a response to the industrialization and the feeling of rootlessness that came when people started to move around the world and their identities no longer were connected to pre-determined social roles from ancestors. Instead identity had to be based less on these things and more on i.e. where these people came from, their language, past history and culture (Gellner 1996). From this aspect I argue that feelings of belonging and solidarity might as well be constructed around the perception of a regional identity as well as a national one. When looking at pan-African ideas about the discourse of nationalism, one has to keep in mind that many of the nations referred to are different from those belonging to the states, which borders are drawn by western colonial powers. Instead pan-African ideas emphasize the existence of nations and unity among people on a whole other basis (Nathan 2004).

I will use the discourse about national identity to outline variables and instruments of identity-construction. I believe many of the variables often mentioned in the academic discourse of national identity can also be applied in the construction of a regional identity. When talking about collective identity Gellner and many other scholars argue that nationalism is a political principle which is connected to the nation based on age, will and culture (Gellner 1996, Smith 1998: 29). Without these elements, no nation can exist. I agree with these scholars that the 'nation' is a social construction which is neither absolute, nor unchangeable (Hobsbawm 1994, Gellner, 1996, Smith, 1998). Billig (2002) argues that national identity is reproduced every single day in every communicative interaction. Looking at the discussion of national identity and interests in Spencer & Howard's text *Nationalism – a critical introduction* (2002: 58) we can see how they conclude that national identities are very much results of political constructions which greatly helps in providing political frameworks so much that it can be seen as a condition for other political strategies. But it is important to remember to look at national identity as something more complex than simply the propaganda of political elites. The fact that national identity often is promoted in these ways does not automatically guarantee national acceptance as we saw stated in the part of common knowledge. Hereafter I will look at different variables in the construction of identity. I find it important to stress the fact that these variables are interlinked and should be viewed as overlapping parts in a complex construction. Later in this paper, in the analysis-chapter, I will use these theories to look at how different pan-African movements have used these variables to call for a united African people. Thus, in my thesis I have

applied these variables from the national identity-discourse to the regional level and my intention have been to see how these variables are used also in the construction of a regional African identity.

LANGUAGE

I will here look at how language is related to the concept of identity. The relationship between language and identity is highly fascinating. Language is present in all aspects of identity shaping. Since communication is conditional for identification. I take the position, following West (1992), that identification is related to the desire for recognition. This idea makes at least one second actor necessary, to make communication between them possible. According to Özkirimli (2000) communication, together with imagination and constraint, is needed to shape and sustain actors' identities. When two people speak to each other, or communicate in any other way, they are not only exchanging information but also constantly reorganizing the sense of who they are and how they relate to the surrounding environment. In other words, they are very much engaged in identity construction (Norton 1997). Language is thus seen as a way of maintaining perceptions and mediating information and that is the core in the relationship between language and power. It is through social interactions that we construct our common 'identity' (Johansson 2007: 19). Simply put it, I would say that communication is a way to get acceptance and support for ones truth and in that way also for ones constructed identity. Here one can remind himself (or herself) that the acceptance of those official documents which I look at in this thesis is taken for granted and this shows on the power in language. Those who wrote, and signed, AU's and OAU's documents thus have the power of language, but without the acceptance of "the common" these documents would be worth nothing. Though language is not only a tool for power, but –according to B. Andersson (2006)- also a criteria for defining a Nation. There are many ways scholars have tried to define a nation. Ethnicity, common history, cultural roots and language are some of the criteria that have been mentioned. Though no definition of a nation is not absolute; many nations share the same language, and several languages can exist within one nation. But still, since language is a way to communicate, which is a way of sustaining identity, it has to be seen as an important part of identity-construction (Hobsbawm 1992). It thus is clear that the power in language lies in its way to communicate to others and this is inevitable visible in my research. What I look at is how politicians have communicated (in words) their ideas and principles of a common African

identity. I thus argue that language as power is somewhat covering everything in this research and should not be separated into its own column.

Robin Lakoff, talks about language not only as a tool for people to identify themselves, but also a way for them to construct belonging to larger groups which are parts of society, and a common culture (Lakoff 2001). Thus language can also be seen as a symbol for ‘us’ and not only as a tool for controlling the political and social discourse. In my analysis I have also viewed language as symbol for culture (which will be described further in the text below) and thus is language placed both as a variable within the “culture”-category and as a symbol.

CULTURE

Many scholars have turned to the idea of culture as an explanatory tool for national identity, and thus I argue I shall also be seen as a tool for regional identity. Smith is one of these scholars and he talks about the importance of culture in the construction of ethnicity and national identity. What is then culture? The concept itself is possible one of the most contested and complex words in the English language but can be simplified as ‘an array of beliefs locked together in relational patterns’ or ‘a system of symbols and meaning’ (Eagleton 2000: 1, Goody 1994: 250). These beliefs and systems are variables which strongly connect to feelings and emotions, and thus help to form national identity.

Since culture is such a complex and dynamic procedure which changes and reformulates, it can not be seen as predetermined to a person. Instead it is a result of many other elements such as his/her perceptions of ‘truth’ and common knowledge (Svedberg 2000: 17). Thus it is here very obvious how these ‘sub-categories’ and variables which I use in my analysis are, in reality, interlinked and overlapping. Some elements that affect culture are myths and stories of a common past, language and symbols. In the next text I will discuss some of these elements and how they are connected to the use of language and power. Language can, as I told earlier in this text, be seen both as a political instrument and as a cultural symbol. In my analysis I have chosen to categorize it as a part of “culture”, even though I have discussed it in a separate text here in the theory-chapter.

OTHERING

From a constructivist perspective collective identity is a sense of “we”, or “us”, which is constructed in contrast to “the other” (Wendt 1999: 336). The feeling of identity often links

“us” with a positive, good meaning and “them” with something negative. This creates a feeling of pride about the one self and strengthens solidarity and feelings of belonging (Hobsbawm 1999).

Tronvoll argues that because diversity itself can not generate a common identity, there must be opposition, a significant order is needed (1999: 1055). I see this as a statement that the creation of ‘us’ is not only based on inclusion, but it also is a result of the exclusion of ‘them’. In other words, by saying something about who ‘we’ are, we also say something about what we are not, i.e. ‘the other’. Tronvoll’s argument also supports E. J. Hobsbawm’s theory that ‘the others’ are anyone who is not ‘us’, those that can be blamed for being responsible for our misery and problems such as feelings of insecurity and of being lost (Hobsbawm, 1992). We could say that the idea of “othering” is used to justify inequalities in society, by giving the own group a positive meaning and also portraying ‘the others’ in negative terms. There have been a lot of debates about whether this process of “othering” really is inevitable when identity is constructed, but yet the concept persist (Svedberg 2000). In many pan-African articles the ‘other’ is often equalled with those western powers which ruled their colonies and oppressed African people during the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. I will look closer at this when analysing my primary material to see how much of the construction of a common African identity which is based on the exclusion of the ‘other’.

“Othering” is in a way something which might be seen as an “umbrella” for all type of identity-constructing; something which is present as a basic presumption. When I look for “othering” in my analysis I narrow the concept down to those phrases where one can clearly discern how a common identity is confirmed by the exclusion of ‘the other’. This might be done by bringing up the “threats and challenges to the African continent and its’ peoples” or something similar. To not mix up the concepts I call the type of othering I use for ‘active othering’ and this is how I will title it from now on. This ‘active othering’ is my own idea and I use it as a heading/title for those texts where one can clearly see how external threats and challenges have been given the meaning of ‘the other’, in distinction to when feelings of ‘us’ are simply used to strengthen perceptions of a common identity.

THE MYTHS

(PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE)

Alongside with a common language, another key component in national identity is the idea of a unified national past. Constructivists see history as being about claims of what we

remember has happened in the past, or what we would like to believe has happened –even if it is highly unlikely it actually did. Thus we are dealing with both historical memories and myths (Smith 1992). How can then these myths and stories be used to strengthen national identity?

A common history can be used to construct a shared past which strengthens this feeling of having something in common (Bell 2003). This common past embodies the nation's values, culture, language and common traditions and creates a feeling of belonging (Österud 1997: 96). All these elements are given an almost sacred value and without them there would be no nation, and no national identity. It is important to look at how these myths of identity, and about a common past, can strengthen social cohesion. By reaching back into the past and moving forward from it to the present a long-term history is created. This is why myths about a common past are political tools to create perceptions of a common, shared, identity; they remind people of their common past and makes it is possible to call the community for action to move forward (Spencer & Wollman 2002: 83). Smith says that the past is connected to peoples' memories and by reminding people of their ancestors it gives them a feeling of a common belonging, which also create a vision of a shared destiny (Smith 1998: 90). In that way it connects the past with the present and the future. The past is what shapes our visions of the present and is thus strongly connected to how people view themselves and their surroundings (Smith 1998: 115).

The connection between use of language to create myths and power is here obvious and having the communicative talent to construct myths or manipulate memories is a useful tool in politics (Spencer &Wollman 2002: 83) When I look for 'myths' in my analysis I will also divide them into myths of a common past or myths of a destined shared future.

SYMBOLS

Regional identity, as well as national identity, is also strongly backed up with symbols which create an idea of a common belonging. Paasi (2000) states that political elites often put labels on concrete and symbolic 'landscapes' to divide and control space and people, and to signify territoriality. Symbolic shaping includes not only names but also many other elements such as coats of arms, flags, rituals such as parades, etc. Similarly; songs, poems, novels and movies bring regional symbolism as part of daily life, making this symbolism as an essential part of nationalism. Many symbols have values that remind us of myths or stories, culture and other perceptions of identity. Smith (1998) thus writes that symbols

usually persist because myths incorporate them. The best symbols are thus those which have strong emotional values, and which as many as possible can understand; they are visual signs of a shared identity (Hobsbawm 1972). Other symbols may emerge from current life. In the contemporary world, actors, such as politicians, often try to create new symbolic meanings to localities and regions to promote their economic success and the supposed 'difference' is then transformed into something unique which should be seen as an advantage in relation to the 'others' (Paasi 2000). This is one of the things which I will be looking for when I analyse the documents from the OAU and AU; is there any parts in the texts where one can show how symbols are given a stronger emotional value in order to appeal feelings of belonging and solidarity? For John Armstrong symbols are crucial to the survival of identification, because they act as 'border guards' distinguishing 'us' from 'them' (Smith 1998: 182). In my analysis I will look at how pan-African movements have used symbols as a way to call for a united African people. It might be things such as bringing up historical events in African history, or using strong symbolic words such as 'democracy' and 'liberation'.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

When choosing what method one shall use for his or her research Sprinz & Wolinsky (2004) make a main division between quantitative and qualitative methods. In contrast to the qualitative method (which chooses to look at many units but with fewer variables) the qualitative method limits its data-collection to fewer units but goes deeper in research. The purpose with a qualitative method is to get a more complete picture of one specific situation, phenomena or event. Thus one has to look at many variables to understand the complexity of the situation. The ideal survey might be one which is both deep and broad, though because of limited time and space this is not possible in this paper. I have instead chosen a qualitative method to look at pan-African movements and their expression of a common African identity. According to Jacobsen (2002 p.145) a qualitative method is most suitable when one aims to get an understanding of a specific phenomenon, as in my case. It gives a better base for surveys where one wants to understand and construe a situation. Also, a quantitative method demands a deeper theoretical understanding from the start since it is harder to go back and change what questions are asked during the research-

process (Jacobsen 2002 p.146). Thus I believe my choice of methods is the best suitable for my research since I have chosen to see *how* an African regional identity has been constructed in the pan-African documents analysed.

Van Evera (1997 p.50) makes another distinction between how a survey/research can be performed; experimentation and observation. Observational tests can either be performed as a large-n test or as a case study. The text above here concluded that a qualitative study would be the best option for the research intended in this paper. Case studies have, by some scholars, been considered being the weakest of these testing methods since data partial correlations are infeasible. However, even though the result from a case-study can not be used to generalize from and to explain other cases, it would be unfair to argue that case-studies are too weak to use. Case studies also have some advantages which offset its weaknesses. First; case studies are very strong tests, since theories are often custom-made for specific cases, second; when one wants to define *how* one variable causes another, this is easier in a case study than in large-n tests (Van Evera 1997 p.54). Thus I argue that a case study is the most suitable survey for my research. I do not intend to come up with, or confirm, a theory which I can generalize and use for other situations than simply what is my case. Instead I simply intend to look at the specific situation of the African continent after decolonisation. I also feel the need to explain that although my study might not have the shape of a classical case study, which looks at one case during one specific time of period, it is so in the matter that I study how a *“common identity can be constructed from a constructivist perspective”* (my sub-question) in the case of Africa since decolonisation.

When doing my analysis I have looked for four different sub-categories; culture, “active othering” (I call this ‘active othering’ since I believe ‘othering’ is present in all kind of identity-construction, which was explain in the theory-chapter), myths and symbols. I used four pens in different colours to highlight parts in my documents. The matrix shown on next page will show how I have arranged my material in each document analysed.

culture	Active othering	myths	symbols

3.2 Material

When data is collected one must decide what kind of method that is best suitable to answer the research question. This decision strongly affects the validity and reliability of the survey (Jacobsen 2002). Often does one distinguish primary data from secondary data. According to Adfoster.com (2011-01-01) primary data entails the use of immediate information in determining the survival of the market. This data is often seen as more “direct” and accommodating since it shows the latest information (adfoster.com 2011-01-01). Secondary data, on the other hand, is the reprocess and reuse of collective information. Secondary data is often obtained from some other source than the case analysed (adfoster.com 2011-01-01); it might for example be an academic article written by someone who has analysed the situation, and thus is the secondary material embossed by the writer’s subjective perception of the situation. I have, in this thesis, used both primary and secondary sources of data to look at pan-African regionalism in Africa and I will now give a presentation of some of the data I have used.

SECONDARY DATA

My secondary data does mainly consist of articles and books from constructivist scholars which discuss the construction of identity by the use of myths, stories, symbols, culture and the method of ‘othering’. I used these data to outline what has previous been said by academic scholars about regional organisations and identity construction. These secondary materials gave me a broad theoretical base for my survey which I could apply it to pan-African movements to see how an African identity has been expressed since the time of decolonisation.

Some scholars have been used more frequently than others and I have tried to use materials written by internationally recognised academics within the fields of research. In the text about social constructivism I often refer to articles and texts written by Alexander Wendt,

who is one of the major social constructivist scholars in the field of international relations. I also looked at work made by Anthony D. Smith who is a professor of nationalism and is considered one of the founders to nationalism as a field of study. The work by A. D. Smith is useful in many ways when looking at regional organisations, who often are trying to overcome national identities and nationalism to unite its people around common interests and ideas. Without an understanding about how national identity is constructed one will have a very limited capability to understand and analyse how a regional identity can be so.

Some of the secondary materials I have used are, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, focused on the European Union. I believe these materials are useful also in my case. The discourse around the European Union is, as mentioned earlier, the biggest academic discourse about collective-, non-state- identity and instead of having to do all the research over again myself I have chosen to apply, and adapt, these documents to the African continent. Some examples of such documents are the articles written by Babarinde (2007) and Paasi (2000) which I have had great use of reading in accordance to this research.

PRIMARY DATA

In the analysis-chapter I used primary data to see how pan-African leaders have used ideas of a common identity to unite its people around shared interests and values.

The first document I used was the Organisation of African unity charter which was signed in the City of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25th day of May, 1963. The Charter is available in its full size in English online and it outlines the principles and purposes of the OAU.

I also looked at the “Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relations to the pan-African parliament”. This document was adopted in 2001, entered into force the 14 Dec 2003, and the last signature accepting this document was as late as the 1 Feb 2010. This document is interesting because the document was adapted so close to the change from OAU to AU in 2002. It might be possible to see some changes in the expressions of African identity over this period of time, which might be able to contribute to the understanding of different pan-African movements. Another reason I choose this document is because it clearly has a pan-African perspective. The pan-African perspective in this document is however not only a positive factor, although it does contribute to the survey about African identity. Since the other two documents does mainly have a structural focus which outlines how the organizations they describe are built up internally it might

give the picture that these document do not care as much about the idea of an African identity as this second document.

Finally, I also looked at the constitutive act of the AU, which clearly outlines the interests and objectives of the AU during a very important change; the inauguration of AU as a replacement for the OAU. The constitutive act outlines the fundamental ideas and objectives of the organization and therefore is an analysis of this act indispensable when one wishes to get a better understanding of AU in its development as an organisation and what view they want to give about themselves, and thus how they perceive themselves. I believe it is extra interesting to look at the constitutive act since it was implemented less than a year after the attacks in 9/11. Since I also analysed the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relations to the pan-African parliament I found it interesting to see if these documents, together, talked about African identity. Since the CA was adapted in 2002, which was at the same period of time as the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relations to the pan-African parliament I have used both these document to analyse how an African identity was expressed during this time, which means that instead of trying to look for differences between these documents which might show on a possible change in the expression, I use them both as complements to each other in looking to get an understanding about the political identity-discourse during the early 21st century.

One major problem with looking at primary material from AUs' official website is that the English version of the website only contains a fraction of the information the French version has. Many documents are only available in French and even though the official languages of the Union are stated to be French, English, Portuguese, Arabic and Swahili it seems like most focus is put on the French website and that many documents have not been translated into the other languages. This, of course, strongly limits the validity and reliability of my research and has to be taken into consideration when looking at why I have chosen some primary data when there seems to be many further documents which could be used. Although, I believe, since all decisions and actions taken by the AU should be able to be traced back to the principles and objects of the Union, which are clearly stated in the English version of its Constitutive Act, I still believe this paper will contribute to the research about the AU. The problem with many primary documents being published in French, instead of English, is however something which has limited me in this research and I will beneath outline some of my other delimitations for this thesis.

3.3 *Delimitations*

There is almost unlimited amount of secondary material to analyse about the AU. There has clearly been an interest in the academic world to look at the development of the organisation as well as its obstacles and opportunities. Because the huge amount of data and material available it would be impossible for me to even try to look at all documents which discuss the AU. Neither has it been my intention to analyse all secondary data written about the organization.

Another limitation I have chosen in this thesis is in the time-period I look at. Although the history of the African continent is very interesting and absorbing I believe it would not be possible to go through it. Neither, would it be very helpful for this research, since the paper simply aims to look at how an African identity is created to unite people around common African values and interests. I have chosen to focus on the latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st. This period is especially interesting since it embraces the period from a time with newly decolonised states to the present, which has included a significant change in the development on the continent.

4.0 ANALYSIS

In my analysis I have looked at three official documents from mainly two different periods of pan-African movements and tried to identify variables which the social constructivist theory emphasises in the construction of identity.

My intention has been to answer the question:

“How has the expression of a common African identity in pan-African movements changed since decolonisation?”

The variables I have brought up as most important in my theory-chapter, and which I have looked for, are:

OTHERING, CULTURE, MYTHS (past and present) and SYMBOLS

I, once again, stress the importance to understand that these “sub-categories”, which I use, are in reality both overlapping and interlinked. Many things and expressions can correctly be classified as both a myth and a symbol, or a myth can express an idea of a common culture. Thus, I find it important to mention that my classification is based on my very much subjective view and perception of the documents.

All primary documents are enclosed at the end of this thesis.

4.1 The OAU CHARTER

The OAU Charter was signed in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia in 1963 during the installation of the Organization of African Unity. It is especially interesting to analyse this document, not only because it was signed in an era when independence and state sovereignty could not be taken for granted, but also because the inauguration of the OAU is stated by many scholars to have been the biggest pan-African movement during the 20th century (Masilela 2009).

CULTURE

When analysing the OAU Charter I did not find many parts where a shared common culture was brought up literally. Instead I had to analyse the text deeper to find phrases where the assumption of shared interests and common goals. These assumptions possible

reflect the ideas of a common culture with shared interests and goals and the belief that African peoples were willing to unit around them.

“Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples” (p. 1).

The phrase about is brought up on within the five first text-lines in the preface. Even though it does not wordily bring up a shared African culture one can read out the assumption that there does exist a shared interest among the peoples for these things. A shared interest can also be seen as something which cooperation is being based on. This same sentence is also brought up both in the text about ‘active othering’ and as a symbolic term.

In Article 2 one of the purposes of the OAU is stated to be:

“To coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa” (p. 3). This should be done by the coordination of policies in areas such as *diplomacy, education, cultural cooperation and health cooperation* (p. 3).

These statements reflect the idea of having a culture with shared policies in the region. Although it does not say that such a culture exist the text shows that its writers thought it was important to cooperate to achieve unity.

Thereafter not much information about a possible shared African identity is brought up. Most articles treat the structure of the organization and councils aims and objectives. These articles are very brief and most information is made in bullet-points.

Though, Article 29 consists of one single sentence:

“The working papers of the organization and all its institutions shall be, if possible African languages, English and French, Arabic and Portuguese” (p. 10).

Language is an important part of culture and the expressed wish to use more than five different languages does show the diversity on the continent. Although, one has to mention, this does not have to be a huge obstacle and an impediment for the creation of a common

identity, even if it most likely does make the creation of such more complicated. Here we can use the EU as a very important example of how cooperation between states which use different languages has succeeded.

‘ACTIVE OTHERING’

When looking at this variable I still stress the fact that I mainly look at othering in a way where the external ‘other’ clearly is given a negative meaning. Since all kind of identity-constructing is a kind of othering I have, as explained in the theory-chapter, given this exclusive othering the name of ‘active othering’.

Once again I would like to bring up the text:

“Conscious of the fact that freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples” (p. 1).

The word “freedom” is clearly related to the many years of colonisation and oppression by western, colonial, powers. These powers are here given the meaning of an external threat, something that is threatening the freedom of African states and thereby given a negative value. The “African people” are “us” and “the others” are those who threaten the freedom, equality, justice and dignity of them, i.e. western former colonial powers. Not much later in the text it is expressed that the OAU is...

“Determined to safeguard and consolidate the hard-won independence as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our states, and to fight against neo-colonialism in all its forms” (p. 1).

This sentence does tell a lot about how pan-African leaders thought was important at that time. Once again they bring up the “hard-won independence” and how African states need to join together to fight the external threat of “neo-colonialism in all its forms”. Later on in the text this statement is, again, confirmed by the following words:

“Desirous that all African states should henceforth unite so that welfare and wellbeing of their peoples can be assured” (p. 1).

These parts do confirm the previous thought that “the others” are mostly equalled with western former colonial powers. This is not unnatural when keeping in mind the many decades of oppression African states just recently (at the time when this Charter was written) been independent from. Neither is it surprising that this newly won independence and state sovereignty is on highest priority on the agenda. According to Jansen (year of publishing unknown) and Castellino (2000) recently acknowledged states are likely to put high priority to defend their sovereignty. This later on ended up being one of the things which barred the organization from being able to interfere when states were not able to protect their citizens (Addona 1969, Daleke 2002, Kamanu 1974; An-Na'im 1988). ‘Active othering’ is something which comes back during most articles in the beginning of the Charter. Meanwhile the latter articles focus on the structure of the organization and its tools for implementing policies the sovereignty from colonial rule and their independence from external threats are two very much present matters in those articles treating the purpose, interests and objectives for the organization. The organization shall, according to article 2;

“promote unity and solidarity of the African states” and “eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa” (p. 3)

This, once again, show how much of the focus that was on the external, ‘the other’, when talking about the African peoples (and their identity).

MYTHS

In contrast to the Constitutive Act, which will be presented later on in the analysis, the OAU Charter does not specifically use ‘myths’ about the past. They do talk about the importance of sovereignty and to:

“safeguard and consolidate the hard-won independence” (p. 1).

Although, this can be seen as a way to remind the reader about the past, they mainly mention these things in the context of bringing up common threats or common interests, which, I have found, belong more under the sub-categories ‘culture’ or ‘active othering’.

There is no mentioning of a common African history or a shared past, which might be seen as either a way of trying to look forward and away from a history marked by oppression, or as an acknowledgement that such a common, shared past does not exist. Even though African states and peoples all have the experience of colonialism they have not gone through it as a united group, whose identity should be seen as stronger than their different tribal belongings, but as Xhosas, Zulus, Indians and Africans etc.

I am currently reading Nelson Mandela's' book "*Long walk to freedom*" (1994), which he wrote during his years at Robben Island prison. It is a very fascinating and amazing story, which I believe most people would learn a lot from reading and something which have hit me is how he talks about other freedom-fighters, colleges, friends and contacts; I was surprised to find out that they still related their identity strongly to their tribal heritage and fathers' occupation. Even though they fought together for freedom and independence they were not, and neither did they seem to want to become, one united people other than in the fight against apartheid and oppression from their western colonial powers.

SYMBOLS

As well as with 'myths' I found that symbols were not often, or at all, brought up in the OAU Charter. This did surprise me when I analysed the document. In the preface it did bring up freedom, equality, justice and dignity as essential objectives for African peoples, giving these words, as I mentioned above, a somewhat symbolic meaning for African culture. The terms 'brotherhood' and 'solidarity' are also mentioned in the preface. Other than that not many symbols, or things which could be analysed as having a symbolic value, are present in the OAU Charter. Neither do they mention any historic dates which symbolize victories and relate to feelings of pride. I believe this is a true sign that the continent, although now free from colonialism and willing to unite for development, still was very divided and shattered. Not only had they until just recently been ruled by other powers, they had been forced to learn different languages and to live under very different regime-systems. Something I learned from reading Nelson Mandela's' book (1994) was that not only were the region shattered by different states' interests, but also within these states were peoples' identities and belongings strongly divided between tribes, races and areas etc. This all makes the task of constructing a common regional identity, which all these peoples can relate to and feel belonging with, much harder. Maybe it was too early to start talking about finding a "new", "African" identity so soon after the liberation from colonialism.

Summary of identity-construction in the OAU Charter:

culture	Active othering	myths	symbols
		past, present, future	
Preface	Preface	preface	preface
freedom, equality, justice, dignity common determination	freedom, equality, justice, dignity safeguard independence fight neo-colonialism		freedom, equality, justice, dignity brotherhood, solidarity
Article 2	unite all African states		
achieve better life	promote unity and solidarity		
cultural cooperation	eradicate all forms of colonialism		
Article 29			
official languages			

CONCLUSION

When analysing the OAU Charter I found that meanwhile active othering and culture where brought up in several places ideas of a common past and shared symbols where less mentioned in the Charter. This was somewhat surprisingly to me since I had thought I would find more stories about the past. The alternative to bring up stories about how their fellow countrymen have fought for independence could have been used to unite African peoples around a shared past. As I stated earlier in this text my explanation for the avoidance of mentioning such symbolic and historic icons is that it was simply too early to try to unite people around, and get them to accept, a “new” identity. Their new independence and sovereignty was not rooted deep enough and states did have problems with internal violence and civil conflicts. When people within states are as divided and different as within these newly independent states it is an even “further road to walk” before a new common, regional identity can be accepted.

Looking at the matrix below it shows that among the factors looked for in this research ‘active othering’ is the one which I found used most in the OAU Charter, and which I latter

found being a crucial part of pan-African leaders' construction of a common identity. The idea of an external threat, 'the other', is not only brought up several times but can also be seen as something which is present in many other parts of the text. The use of words relating to a shared African culture have, although still carefully, been used a couple of times in the text which might be seen as an attempt to strengthen the idea of a shared common culture.

4.2 Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relating to the pan-African parliament

This document is somewhat different from the other two since it does not aim to inaugurate a new organisation, and thus does not have as its purpose to outline this any objections and principles. What made me interesting in this document was its title; "...relating to the pan-African parliament". Since, this document was adopted during the same time as the Constitutive Act it is also interesting to see if it brings up any additional information about regional African identity during this period of time.

CULTURE

"Determined to promote democratic principles and popular participation, to consolidate democratic institutions and culture and to ensure good governance."

These words stress the importance of having a democratic society, with a democratic culture. Later on the text once again states that the economic community shall consolidate democratic institutions and:

"the culture of democracy, as well as the promotion of good governance and the rule of the law".

Once again the text brings up democracy which shows how important it is for the region to consolidate this as a part of its culture.

Article 17 determine that the working languages of the pan-African parliament shall be, if possible; “*African languages, Arabic, English, French and Portuguese*” (p. 9). These are the same languages which were stated to be the official languages in the OAU Charter in 1963 and it shows on diversity within the region. In the theory-chapter of this thesis I described how both Lakoff (2001) and Norton (1997) talked about identity as something which was constructed by social interaction. By interaction one can get acceptance for his or hers truth, and in that way get the idea of a created identity confirmed by others.

Since social interaction is built on communication this makes language a tool for constructing identity. Later on in the theory-chapter I also brought up how Andersson (2006) described the use of language not only as a tool for social interaction but also as one of the criteria for a Nation. I believe the lack of a common language is one of the things which weaken the cohesion within nation-states in the region. Comparing the situation to that in Europe, where one might say that a European identity actually does exist although the region uses several different languages, the situation in Africa is, according to me, a lot more complex; not only do member-states use different languages, not even within the states do the residents use the same language.

‘ACTIVE OTHERING’

Also in this document I found that the challenges of “external threats” were discussed. Early in the preface the text brought up:

“...the pan-African parliament is informed by a vision to provide a common platform for African peoples and their grass-roots organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent”.

I believe these common challenges are brought up to give people the feeling that they need to unite against these threats (which are equalled with “the other”) as a counterweight. By talking about the ‘other’ they call for the people to overlook their own differences, which are seen as minor in comparison to the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’, to unite against these external ‘other’. This is exactly what Tronvoll (1999) and Hobsbawm (1992) discussed in their works about ‘othering’ and how the own group, ‘us’ was given a positive meaning in contrast to the negative meaning of ‘the other’. Later on in the document it says that one of the functions of the pan-African parliament shall be to:

“...draw attention to the challenges facing the integration process in Africa... (p. 6)”.

Once again we see what Tronvoll (1999) talked about; namely that diversity in itself can not generate a common identity, there must be an opposition to unite against. When looking at the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relating to the pan-African parliament and the active othering I found here I can see a difference from the type that I saw in the OAU Charter. In the OAU Charter I got the feeling that ‘the other’ was mainly equalled with former European colonial powers, which is only natural after the many decades of colonisation the continent had just recently been liberated from. When looking at the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relating to the pan-African parliament I see that the external challenges are described as challenges *“facing the integration process in Africa”* (p. 6). The establishment of the Economic community is in itself another example of the focus on possibilities, such as economic integration. Thus one can argue that there has been a change in focus, from mainly prioritizing the newly won sovereignty and liberty member-states are now more focused on where they can get by cooperation and integration. The CA shows that they identified the need for the organization to put itself above the sovereignty of individual states in those cases where states can not protect its own citizens. No longer is absolute, complete, sovereignty the main priority, but instead common development and cooperation is emphasized.

MYTHS

I was surprised to find out that this document actually talks about a common identity more clearly than the other documents do. Not because I did not expect to find any statements which were based on the assumption that such an identity existed, but probably because I did not hope for any statements where the term was used. Especially since I did not find as much about an African regional identity in the CA as I might have hoped for. Already in the third part of the preamble the text states that:

“Noting, in particular, the adoption by the Assembly of Heads of State of Government meeting in its 36th Ordinary Session in Lome, Togo, from 10 to 12

July, 2000, of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, thereby giving concrete expression to the common vision of a united, integrated and strong Africa.”

These text-lines talk about the CA as something which confirms the existence of a common vision of a united Africa.

In the 3rd Article the documents objectives are stated and paragraph number 6 and 8 are especially interesting from an identity-aspect. According to paragraph number 6 the pan-African parliament shall:

“contribute to a more prosperous future for the peoples of Africa by promoting collective self-reliance and economic recovery”.

This paragraph shows that there is a belief, or at least a willingness to promote such a belief, that the people of Africa share a common future. This idea is reinforced in paragraph number 8 where the need to:

“strengthen Continental solidarity and build a sense of a common destiny among the peoples of Africa” is stressed.

I was somewhat surprised to find statements which so clearly expressed the need to construct this sense of belonging. This is exactly what Smith (1992) and Bell (2003) talked about when they described how ‘memories of myths’ could be used to strengthen the feeling of belonging by constructing ‘memories’ of a shared past. As I brought up in the theory-chapter Smith (1998) says that the main reason for using myths to remind people of a common past is to strengthen the feeling that they also will share the future, they have the same destiny.

SYMBOLS

Neither in this document did I find any parts where I could clearly see the usage of any symbols to strengthen feelings of belonging to a common identity. No flags, anthems or signs are ever brought up. Although, this absence might have to do with the nature of the documents analysed, rather than pointing at an absence of such symbols in reality. Perhaps would it contribute to the understanding of regional identity to see how pan-African leaders expressed themselves in speeches to the people? Political speeches are often aimed to

attract the audience's sense of identity and belonging and thus might contain words and phrases which have an emotional connection, and thus are given a symbolic value. Later on in this thesis I suggest topics for further research and I strongly believe an analysis of speeches from political pan-African leaders would be both interesting and contributing to the understanding of a regional identity in general, and an African identity in particular.

Summary of identity-constructing in the Protocol to the treaty establishing the African economic community relating to the pan-African parliament

culture	Active othering	myths	symbols
		past, present, future	
Preface	Preface	preface	preface
promote democratic culture several working languages	common challenges	the CA confirms that a common vision does exist	
		Article 3	
		a shared future build a sense of common destiny	

4.3 The Constitutive Act

Shortly after the decision to transform the OAU, and maybe to mark for the rest of the world the changes, African leaders signed the Constitutive act in July 2000. Though, it took a bit more than two years before the OAU was totally reformed to AU (Daleke 2005).

The Constitutive Act comprises 33 articles and the main focus in this thesis will be on the preface and on article 3 and 4, which deal with the Unions objectives and principles. I argue it is in these chapters that one can really tell the ambitions of the Union. The latter articles of the CA will also be analysed, though they contain less information about how the AU view themselves and their ideas. Instead, they give a very brief outline of the structure of the AU and uses bullet-points to state what responsibilities each internal organ is meant to have.

CULTURE

Also culture is brought up in the preface of the CA. The text says that the AU shall be determined to “consolidate democratic institutions and culture” (p. 2).

In one part of the preface the text read like following:

“GUIDED by our common vision of a united and strong Africa...to strengthen solidarity and cohesion among our peoples”

Here the CA brings up their “common vision of a united and strong Africa”, which shows the assumption that such a common vision possibly does exist, or at least the possibility that this ‘common vision’ can be constructed, and/or strengthened by the power in language. Also the need for African peoples to come together around a common identity with one culture, which share common interests and visions, is here clearly stated.

In the 3rd Article, which states the objectives of the Unions, the need to:

“promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels...” is expressed.

‘ACTIVE OTHERING’

One clear sentence in the preface where ‘active othering’ is clearly outspoken is the following part:

“CONSIDERING that since its inception, the Organization of African Unity has played a determining and invaluable role in the liberation of the continent, the affirmation of a common identity and the process of attainment of the unity of our continent and has provided a unique framework for our collective action in Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world” (p. 2).

This clearly states that there is an assumed relationship between ‘us’ and “the rest of the world”. Even though this sentence does not necessary give the ‘other’ a negative meaning it does assume that there is, and shall be, a division between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The use of phrases such as “a common identity” and “the liberation of the continent” show that the AU is aware about the impact of, and need for a common African identity and their

use of these phrases state that such an identity does exist. The CA also bring up ‘the other’ more often than I expected; several times does the document mention the “challenges that confront our continent”, bringing up “globalization” as such a challenge, etc. By talking about external threats the act emphasises the need to unite against these challenges.

This talk about uniting by the exclusion of ‘the other’ is very much present early in the CA and it is also shown in many parts other of the text.

In the 3rd Article objective d (p. 3) states that one of the Unions objectives shall be to:

“promote and defend African common positions on issues of interests to the continent and its peoples”

In this objective there is, once again, the assumption that there are African common interests. This, we have seen before, but what is important in this text is the indication that these interests need to be defended. The next question might then be “Against what do African interests need to be defended?” This is not outspoken in the article, although one aspect which has shown to be popular among post-colonial scholars is that much of the external threat against African development today comes from western powers, not seldom former colonial ones (Hanchard 1999). Although this might be true in many ways I see a change in how these threats are being defined in the documents I’ve analysed; whereas the OAU Charter often brought up colonialism and neo-colonialism as the main-threats the CA does talk about challenges such as globalization and economic development. One might agree with the idea that western powers is still one of the threats the AU aims to defend their interests against, although the reality probably is a much more complex situation; including threats also from within Africa states themselves.

Later on, in Article 17 (p. 7) the CA states that a pan-African parliament shall be established as part of the organization to ensure full participation of African peoples. This, to me, shows that there is a need for further work in the area of uniting African peoples. The ideas of what I call ‘active othering’ are very much crucial to the understanding of this research and as I have brought up later on in my conclusion-chapter I see a paradox between those statements that point on a change in ‘othering’ and the fact that it might still be the same challenges that faced the continent when the CA was inaugurated as in the 1963’s.

MYTHS

PAST

Stories about the past are brought up in the very first part of the CA. By bringing up how their ‘founding fathers’ were determined to promote unity, solidarity, cohesion and cooperation of the people of Africa. Also the CA early states that:

“Recalling the heroic struggles waged by our peoples and our countries for political independence, human dignity and economic emancipation” (p. 2).

This shall be one of the basics for the organization. These two cases of ‘myths’ are brought up within the ten first text-lines of the CA. Possible is it a strategy; to immediately “remind” the reader about these “shared experiences” and the history to arouse feelings of pride and solemnity over the past.

Also in the text quoted in the text about ‘active othering’ there are clear signs of active othering, beneath I, once again, paste the same text to emphasize also the use of a myth and a story about the past.

“CONSIDERING that since its inception, the Organization of African Unity has played a determining and invaluable role in the liberation of the continent, the affirmation of a common identity and the process of attainment of the unity of our continent and has provided a unique framework for our collective action in Africa and in our relations with the rest of the world” (p. 2).

By bringing up how the organisations predecessor worked, and achieved, affirmation of a common identity and the “unity of our continent” the document not only reminds the reader about what have been achieved in the past, but also manages to connect this to the present and the future.

FUTURE

The future is brought up several times in the CA, giving the reader a feeling of a common shared future where challenges from external threats need to be fought with solidarity, unity and stability. Since the CA is written in a time of organizational change, from the OAU to the AU, the future is the main focus of the whole Act. The act forecasts what changes the AU can do and how it will work. Throughout the Act there is the assumption

of a shared future is clear, and this is underlying in the text also in those parts where it is not verbatim mentioned.

SYMBOLS

The preface of the CA almost immediately brings up symbolic words such as unity, solidarity and cohesion “among peoples of Africa” (p. 1). These words are later brought up several times in the preface and are thereby given special weight and importance. These words are given a somewhat symbolic value, both by showing on a possible existing feeling of belonging among member-states and also describing a vision and an area where the Union aims to work to achieve further development.

culture	Active othering	myths	symbols
		past, present, future	
Preface	Preface	preface	preface
common vision	common identity	heroic struggles the liberation of the continent	unity solidarity
Article 3	challenges		
promote cultural development raise living standards of A people	globalization		
	Article 3		
	defend A interests		
	Article 17		
	establishing the pan-A parliament		

CONCLUSION

To sum up the presence of a common African identity in the CA I can conclude that the authors of the act have been very careful about using terms that indicate that such a shared culture does exist. I believe this is strongly related to the acknowledgement of the many different tribes, existing not only between state borders but also within states, living according to different norms and cultures. Even though they bring up a common identity they still talk about “African peoples”, insinuating that the African peoples are still not one ready to be taken for united group. I believe this use of the words “African peoples” to

stress that there is a difference between several peoples on the continent shows that there is not yet a common African identity established which can overcome tribal identities. This is something I find crucial to understand and I will further develop ideas about it later on in the final conclusion. Maybe such an identity is not the goal for pan-African leaders?

This is something which might be interesting to look for in future AU documents if one wishes to map the possible development of a shared African culture.

When it comes to what I call “active othering” I have, as shown above, found many examples where this document, as well as the two others analysed, brings up external threats and challenges to the region. Although, as I wrote in the analysis of the Protocol to the treaty establishing African Economic Community relating to the pan-African parliament, I see a change in what direction this ‘active othering’ is pointing. From mainly being concerned by threats against their sovereignty and seeing former colonial powers as the “evil other” the latter documents call their member-states to “give up” some of their sovereignty in order to development and economic interaction.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This research has been both very interesting and exiting and I have learned a lot about how regional identity can be constructed. In both the OAU Charter and the CA I found that ideas of a common African identity where mainly expressed in the preface and the first articles, which where aimed at describing the interests and the objectives of the organizations they represented. During the latter articles in the documents analysed most text was in bulletpoints and mainly described the structure of the organizations. Thus, my analysis has mainly been focused on these prefaces and first articles in the documents analysed, although I still believe I have got enough material and data to argue that my research is useful when looking at how a common, regional, African identity has been expressed in official documents from pan-African movements.

The result from my research can be presented as two main-conclusions, which both will be further developed in this chapter. The first is that African leaders neither did, or seemed to have the intention to, create feelings of the African population as one people. Instead they emphasize on the many diversities between tribes and groups of peoples. Although, there is a stated need to “*build a sense of common destiny*” and belonging, a unity, between African peoples and this is stressed and by pointing at external challenges, e.g. the ‘other’, facing the continent. The type of ‘active othering’ and how these ideas have changed from the OAU Charter in 1963 to the latter documents analyzed will be further developed later on in this chapter. However, first there will be a more ingoing presentation on the conclusion that pan-African leaders did not try to create one single African identity.

When I analysed the OAU Charter I was surprised to find so little about how pan-African movements actually viewed themselves. As I show in several parts of my analysis; their African identity was mainly brought up in relation to western powers, who were given the negative value of “the others”. Even thogh one can see a clear increase in awareness of the importance of regional identity in the latter document analysed, there is still a lot of caution towards using the term “identity” and the African people were always titled in plural; as the African peopleS. This shows how pan-African leaders still stress the importance of emphasizing the many different tribes and societies on the continent to not do the same misstake as western colonial powers did when simply viewing them all as “Africans” in a

patronizing way. This was somewhat surprising to me; to find out how diversified the African peoples were, not only between member-states but also within the states themselves. In my analysis I sometimes refer to Nelson Mandela's book "*Long walk to freedom*" and explain how it struck me that not even pan-African leaders such as Mandela himself, saw the Africans as one people but as Xhosa, Zulu, Basotho and Tswana etc. (Mandela 1994). Although Mandela and his comrades fought for a free nation and argued that all people who shared their belief would have an advantage in fighting together they did not try to create an African identity in any other sense than that they all believed in freedom and equal rights. I believe the main reason that pan-African leaders were so careful in their expression of a possible common African identity is that they saw the obstacles for a regional identity and believed it would be met by resistance and opposition which only would strengthen people's feelings of tribal pride, which would diversify, rather than unite, them. As I stated earlier I see it as an important fact that when western colonial leaders ruled the continent they simply saw the African native people as one homogenous group (Mandela 1994), not worthy of further recognition than as 'the black people' and I believe this is something pan-African leaders wanted to lift forward by emphasizing on their tribal heritage.

However, in the latter documents I did find statements which stressed the need to "*build a sense of common destiny among the peoples of Africa*", and I believe these shall be seen as proof of some kind of change in the ideas of a regional belonging, an identity.

5.1 The change in 'active othering'

The second important conclusion this thesis can show upon is a change in how external challenges are being defined. This is a somewhat paradoxical statement because I argue that even though there is a visible change in how pan-African leaders have talked about external threats one might still argue that the concept comes down to the same ideas, although they have developed together with i.e. globalization.

Earlier in this thesis I outlined how several scholars within the identity-discourse have described collective identity as the sense of 'us', which is constructed in contrast to 'the other' (Wendt 1999, Hobsbawm 1992, Svedberg 2000).

During the first document analysed I found, maybe not surprisingly, that 'the other' was often equalled with western former colonial powers. Several times were colonialist ideas such as neo-colonialism brought up as the main threat to the African member-states and their main objectives for unification was the protection of state-sovereignty, freedom,

equality and dignity. In the analyses of the latter documents I still found a lot of texts which stressed the importance of an African identity to protect the regions interests from external threats and challenges. Though, one difference is that now these external challenges are not inevitable equalled with western former colonial powers but also with globalization and economic development etc. Therefore one might say that there has been a change in focus from mainly looking at western powers and oppressors towards focusing more on threats such as environmental issues and scarce resources, threats which are present all countries. On the other hand one might argue that these challenges in fact are outcomes from western industrial countries welfare and their usage of scarce resources, deforestation and pollution. In that way many of the challenges facing less developed countries, such as the African continent, can be seen as results from another kind of western oppression. Even though the colonial period is over western, more developed, states still take advantage of the poorer less developed ones. This point of view would argue that although circumstances have changed fears of external challenges are still rooted in the same ground as in 1963; the oppression and exploitation of developing states by richer, industrial, western ones. This discussion shows that the complexity of identity construction is too advanced for one to be able to say “this is what happened”, which is why further research about the topic is both needed and interesting. Although, from this research I can conclude that there has been a change in how pan-African documents described the challenges facing the region.

5.2 Discussion and suggestions for further research

Something that i find interesting is the fact that much of the African identity is based on the concept of 'othering'. To me it seems like the process of uniting the African people is based very much on the exclusion of 'the other', who very often are equalled with former colonial powers. This might be a way of expression and protesting against the oppression many African nation-states experienced during the yeas of colonisation, but still does not change the fact that the African identity is based more on exclusion than on inclusion. This inevitable lead me to wonder what will happen when/if the day comes when African states are no longer oppressed by western powers. Will their African identity then be weakened and seen as un-necessary in lack of threat? This, I believe, is a very interesting topic for further research.

During the process of analysing the official documents I found that identity is in many ways present in an underlying way. Though not always wordily expressed. Since the aim with this thesis was to research and analyse how official pan-African documents have spoken about a common African identity I found it sometimes hard to find any material in my chosen documents which I could use. Recalling the thesis I wrote on B-level about how Obama constructed and re-organized national, American identity in his speeches I got the idea of analysing speeches of leaders during pan-African movements. I did some research about the area and found that there is a gap in contemporary academic material about speakers in Africa, others than Nelson Mandela. I believe it would strongly contribute to the picture of how a common African identity was constructed if there was more documented material and analyses on how their leaders spoke about it available. This is an area which I, myself, now hope to do further research about in the future.

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